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U.S.-VIET AGREEMENT  
BY CARL D. ROBINSON

SAIGON, SOUTH VIETNAM (AP) -- SOUTH VIETNAM'S FOREIGN MINISTER AT THE TIME OF THE 1973 PARIS PEACE AGREEMENT SAYS PRESIDENT NGUYEN VAN THIEU'S GOVERNMENT AGREED TO SIGN THE AGREEMENT ONLY AFTER HENRY A. KISSINGER PROMISED THAT ANY NORTH VIETNAMESE ATTACK WOULD BE MET WITH AN AMERICAN ATTACK.

FORMER FOREIGN MINISTER TRAN VAN LAM SAID PRESIDENT NIXON ALSO PROMISED IN A LETTER TO THIEU TO "REACT IMMEDIATELY AND VIGOROUSLY" TO ANY LARGE-SCALE NORTH VIETNAMESE OFFENSIVE. BUT HE ADDED THAT NO SECRET AGREEMENT WAS SIGNED BETWEEN THE TWO GOVERNMENTS.

THE FORD ADMINISTRATION HAS ADMITTED A COMMITMENT WAS MADE TO SOUTH VIETNAM BUT DENIED ANY SECRET AGREEMENT. IT SAYS ANY COMMITMENT TO MILITARY ACTION WAS CANCELED BY THE CONGRESSIONAL BAN ON SUCH ACTION LATER IN 1973.

LAM, WHO IS NOW PRESIDENT OF THE SOUTH VIETNAMESE SENATE, SAID IN AN INTERVIEW THAT WASHINGTON NEVER CLARIFIED WHAT NIXON MEANT BY HIS PLEDGE TO "REACT IMMEDIATELY AND VIGOROUSLY," TO A NORTH VIETNAMESE ATTACK. BUT HE SAID KISSINGER, THEN NIXON'S NATIONAL SECURITY ADVISER AND THE NEGOTIATOR OF THE PARIS AGREEMENT, PROMISED MILITARY ACTION.

LAM SAID THIEU SENT HIM TO PARIS IN JANUARY 1973 TO GET THE ANSWER TO TWO QUESTIONS:

"I WANTED TO BE SURE NORTH VIETNAM WOULD NOT ATTACK US AGAIN. KISSINGER REPLIED THE U.S. WOULD NOT LET THIS HAPPEN AND, IF SO, THE AMERICANS WOULD ATTACK. HE ALSO ASSURED US TOP LEVEL DIPLOMACY WOULD BE USED TO DEAL WITH RUSSIA AND CHINA TO LIMIT MILITARY SUPPLIES OF AN OFFENSIVE NATURE TO NORTH VIETNAM."

LAM SAID KISSINGER TOLD HIM: "THE TWO COMMUNIST GIANTS WILL NOT GIVE OFFENSIVE ARMS TO NORTH VIETNAM. YOU ARE STRONG ENOUGH IN THE SOUTH TO SETTLE YOUR PROBLEMS POLITICALLY."

LAM SAID THE SECOND QUESTION CONCERNED THE USE OF INFILTRATION TRAILS AND SANCTUARIES IN LAOS AND CAMBODIA FOR ATTACKS ON SOUTH VIETNAM.

"KISSINGER QUOTED LE DUC THO AS SAYING 15 DAYS AFTER THE AGREEMENT THAT NORTH VIETNAM WOULD STOP USING LAOS AND CAMBODIA FOR INFILTRATION AND BASES FOR ATTACKS ON THE SOUTH," LAM SAID.

"SO, I REPORTED THE MEETING TO PRESIDENT THIEU AND WAS GIVEN THE BLUE LIGHT TO GO AHEAD AND SIGN THE AGREEMENT. WE HAD ALL THE ASSURANCES FROM THE UNITED STATES."

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